

Qualitative Case Review

Eastern Region

Fiscal Year 2004

Preliminary Results

Office of Services Review

October 2003

Executive Summary

- 24 cases were reviewed for the Eastern Region Qualitative Case Review conducted in October 2004.
- **The overall Child Status score was 100%. This exceeds the exit requirement of 85%. The overall score for System Performance improved over last year with 83.3% acceptable cases. With rounding, this meets the exit criteria of 85%.** (All results are preliminary until all case stories have been received.)
- Caregiver Support, Safety, Appropriateness of Placement, Health/Physical Well-being, and Caregiver Functioning were acceptable on all cases (100%).
- Overall Child Status was acceptable on all cases (100%).
- Learning Progress (87.5%) and Satisfaction (91.7%) each scored above the exit criteria. Effective Results, Child and Family Participation and Emotional / Behavioral Well-being were each near the exit criteria at 83.3%. Four of the six core indicators Child and Family Team/Coordination, Child and Family Planning Process, Plan Implementation and Tracking and Adaptation all exceeded the 70% mark for exit criteria.
- On Child Status seven indicators were up, one was down, and two remained the same. On System Performance four indicators were up, three were down, and four remained the same. Pronounced increases were seen in Successful Transitions (from 54.2% to 83.3%) and Family Resourcefulness (from 50% to 76.9%). A pronounced decrease was seen in Functional Assessment (from 58.3% to 37.5%).
- The Castle Dale, Moab, Ute Tribal Services, and Vernal offices achieved 100% acceptable System Performance on their cases.
- There was a difference in foster care scores and home-based scores. Foster care cases had acceptable System Performance scores on 92.9% of the cases. Home-based cases had acceptable System Performance scores on 70% of the cases. Of the four cases that had unacceptable system performance, one had the goal of Adoption and the other three had the goal of Remain Home.
- The longer a case had been open, the more likely it was to have acceptable System Performance. System Performance was similar across all age groups.
- Being a new worker with the agency or having a high caseload did not appear to be a factor. Of the seven cases where the worker had been employed by DCFS for a year or less, 100% had acceptable System Performance scores. Only two of the 24 cases reviewed had workers with a caseload greater than 17. Both of these cases had acceptable System Performance.

Methodology

The Qualitative Case Review was held the week of October 27-31, 2003. Twenty-four open DCFS cases in the Eastern Region were selected and scored. Certified reviewers from the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group (CWPPG), the Office of Services Review (OSR), and the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) as well as first time reviewers from DCFS and outside stakeholders reviewed the cases. The cases were selected by CWPPG based on a sampling matrix assuring that a representative group of cases was reviewed. The sample included children in out-of-home care and families receiving home-based services such as voluntary and protective supervision and intensive family preservation. Cases were selected to include offices throughout the region.

The information was obtained through in-depth interviews with the child (if old enough to participate), his or her parents or other guardians, foster parents (when placed in foster care), caseworker, teacher, therapist, other service providers, and others having a significant role in the child's life. In addition the child's file, including prior CPS investigations and other available records, was reviewed.

Performance Tables

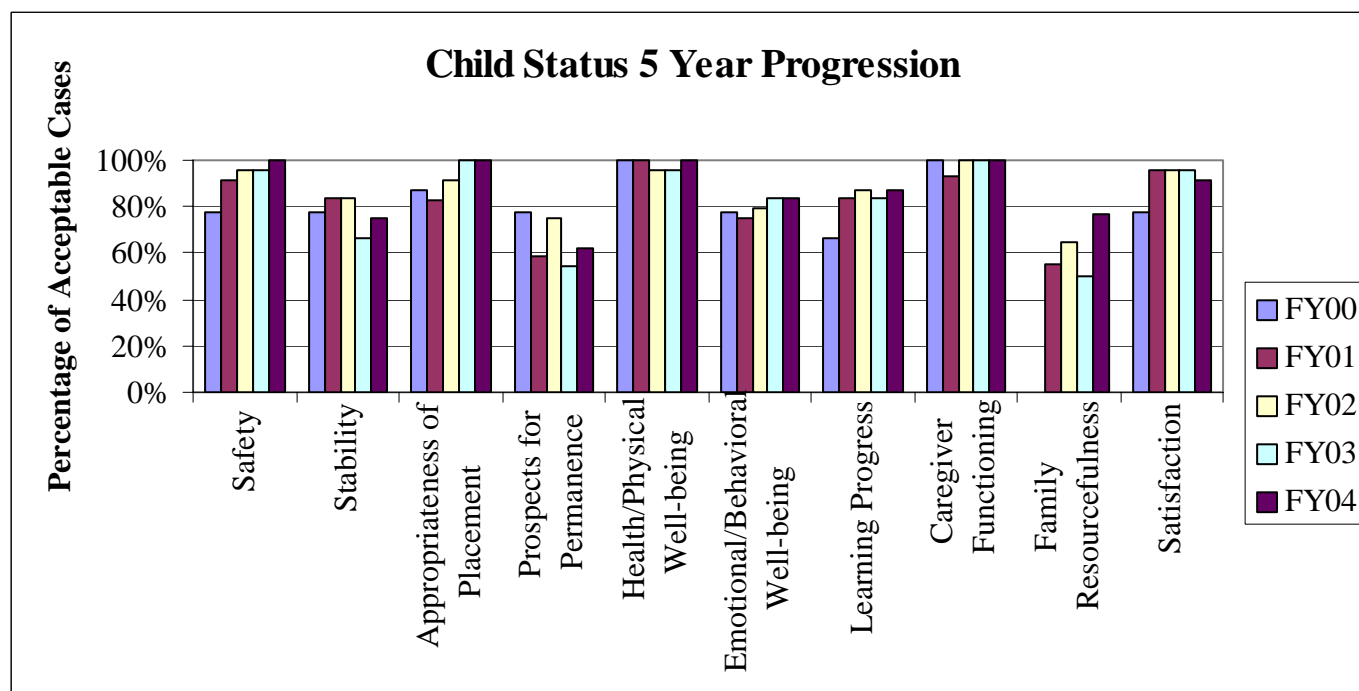
Preliminary data

The results in the following tables are based on the scores submitted at the end of the Eastern Region Review. They contain the scores of 24 cases. These results are preliminary and are subject to change until all reviewers have submitted their case stories.

Eastern Region Child Status									
	# of cases	# of cases		FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	
	# of cases	Needing		Baseline					Current
	Acceptable	Improvement	Exit Criteria 85% on overall score	Scores					Scores
Safety	24	0	100.0%	77.8%	91.7%	95.8%	95.8%	100.0%	
Stability	18	6	75.0%	77.8%	83.3%	79.2%	66.7%	75.0%	
Appropriateness of Placement	24	0	100.0%	87.5%	82.6%	91.7%	100.0%	100.0%	
Prospects for Permanence	15	9	62.5%	77.8%	58.3%	70.8%	58.3%	62.5%	
Health/Physical Well-being	24	0	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	95.8%	95.8%	100.0%	
Emotional/Behavioral Well-being	20	4	83.3%	77.8%	75.0%	79.2%	79.2%	83.3%	
Learning Progress	21	3	87.5%	66.7%	83.3%	87.5%	83.3%	87.5%	
Caregiver Functioning	14	0	100.0%	100.0%	92.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Family Resourcefulness	10	3	76.9%	0.0%	55.6%	66.7%	50.0%	76.9%	
Satisfaction	22	2	91.7%	77.8%	95.8%	95.8%	95.8%	91.7%	
Overall Score	24	0	100.0%	77.8%	83.3%	95.8%	95.8%	100.0%	1)
			0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%						

- 1) *This score reflects the percent of cases that had an overall acceptable Child Status score. It is not an average of FY04 current scores.*

Note: these scores are preliminary and subject to change



Statistical Analysis of Child Status Results:

The overall Child Status score was 100%!

Four indicators reached 100%. Safety, Appropriateness of Placement, Health/Physical Well-being, and Caregiver Functioning (functioning of substitute caregivers, such as foster parents) achieved an acceptable rating in all cases reviewed. Despite limited resources, Eastern Region staff are doing a great job finding the best possible home or facility to meet the needs of the children and these providers are well trained and capable of providing for the needs of the children.

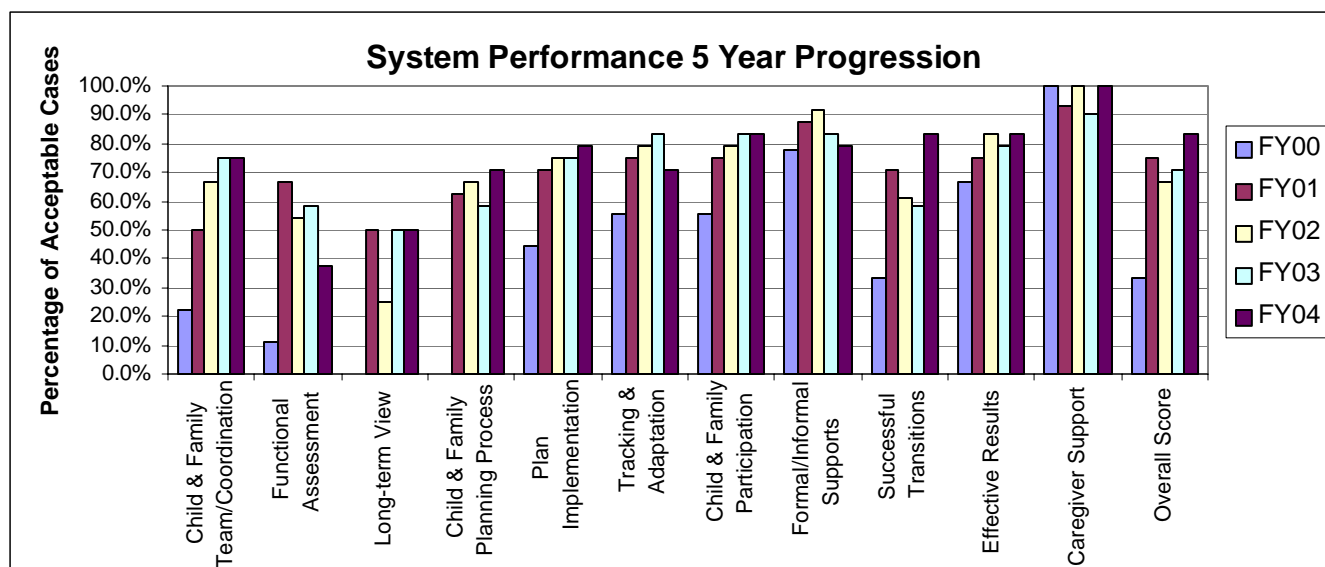
Positive results were also achieved on: Learning Progress (87.5%), Satisfaction (91.7%) and Emotional/Behavioral Well-being (83.3%). There was a pronounced increase in Family Resourcefulness (from 50% to 69.2%) and a significant increase in Stability (from 66.7% to 75%). There was an increase of approximately four percentage points each in Safety, Prospects for Permanence, Health/Physical Well-being, Emotional Well-being, and Learning Progress.

Satisfaction, the only Child Status indicator that decreased, decreased a negligible amount (from 95.8% to 91.7%) and still remained above the exit criteria.

Eastern Region System Performance									
	# of cases	# of cases			FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04
	# of cases	Needing	Exit Criteria 70% on Shaded indicators	Baseline					Current
	Acceptable	Improvement	Exit Criteria 85% on overall score	Scores					Scores
Child & Family Team/Coordination	18	6	75.0%	22.2%	50.0%	66.7%	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%
Functional Assessment	9	15	37.5%	11.1%	66.7%	54.2%	58.3%	37.5%	37.5%
Long-term View	12	12	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Child & Family Planning Process	17	7	70.8%	0.0%	62.5%	66.7%	58.3%	70.8%	70.8%
Plan Implementation	19	5	79.2%	44.4%	70.8%	75.0%	79.2%	79.2%	79.2%
Tracking & Adaptation	17	7	70.8%	55.6%	75.0%	79.2%	83.3%	70.8%	70.8%
Child & Family Participation	20	4	83.3%	55.6%	75.0%	79.2%	83.3%	83.3%	83.3%
Formal/Informal Supports	19	5	79.2%	77.8%	87.5%	91.7%	83.3%	79.2%	79.2%
Successful Transitions	20	4	83.3%	33.3%	70.8%	60.9%	54.2%	83.3%	83.3%
Effective Results	20	4	83.3%	66.7%	75.0%	83.3%	79.2%	83.3%	83.3%
Caregiver Support	14	0	100.0%	100.0%	92.9%	100.0%	90.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Overall Score	20	4	83.3%	33.3%	75.0%	66.7%	70.8%	83.3%	83.3%

1)

1) This score reflects the percent of cases that had an overall acceptable System Performance score. It is not an average of FY04 current scores.



Note: these scores are preliminary and subject to change

Statistical Analysis of System Performance Results:

The overall score for System Performance improved over last year to a level of 83.3% acceptable cases.

Four of the six core indicators, Child and Family Teaming/Coordination, Child and Family Planning Process, Plan Implementation, and Tracking and Adaptation exceeded the 70% mark for exit criteria. This is an indication that this region is making good progress implementing the Practice Model principles in their day-to-day practice.

Successful Transitions demonstrated the greatest improvement from last year, jumping from 54.2% to 83.3%. Other indicators that showed improvement were Child and Family Planning Process (from 58.3% to 70.8%), Caregiver Support (from 90% to 100%) and Effective Results (from 79.2% to 83.3%).

Other indicators that scored well were Child and Family Team Coordination (unchanged at 75%), Child and Family Participation (unchanged at 83.3%), Plan Implementation (unchanged at 79.2%), Formal and Informal Supports (down slightly from 83.3% to 79.2%), and Tracking and Adaptation (down from 83.3% to 70.8%, but still exceeding the exit criteria).

The two core indicators that did not meet the exit criteria were Long Term View (unchanged at 50%) and Functional Assessment (down from 58.3% to 37.5%). Overall there were four System Performance indicators that increased, three that decreased, and four that remained the same.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

RESULTS BY CASE TYPE AND PERMANENCY GOALS

We found that there was a difference in the results when comparing foster care cases with home-based cases. For foster care cases, 13 out of 14 had an acceptable overall System Performance (92.9%%), while only 7 out of 10 in-home cases had acceptable overall performance (70%). This differs from last year's results which did not show a difference in performance between foster care and in –home cases.

Case Type	# in sample	# Acceptable System Performance	% Acceptable System Performance
Foster Care	14	13	92.9%
Home-based	10	7	70%

Cases where the child was at home and the goal was for the child to remain home scored lower than other cases. Six of the nine cases (66.7%) with a goal of Remain Home had acceptable results. Only one other case had unacceptable overall system performance. That case was a foster care case with the goal of Adoption.

Goal	# in sample	# Acceptable System Performance	% Acceptable System Performance
Adoption	1	0	0%
Guardianship	1	1	100%
Independent Living	3	3	100%
Permanent Foster Care	6	6	100%
Remain Home	9	6	66.7%
Return Home	4	4	100%

The three cases where the permanency goal was Remain Home and system performance scored unacceptable also had unacceptable scores in the core indicators. One case had unacceptable scores on all of the six core indicators, another had unacceptable scores in five of the six indicators, and the other had unacceptable scores in four of the six core indicators. All three cases had unacceptable scores in Child and Family Team/Coordination, Functional Assessment, Long-Term View, and Child and

Family Planning Process. Two of the three cases also were unacceptable in Plan Implementation.

RESULTS BY AGE OF TARGET CHILD

The likelihood of having an acceptable score on System Performance was fairly consistent in spite of the age of the child, as shown below.

Age	# in sample	# Acceptable System Performance	% Acceptable System Performance
0 to 5	4	3	75.0%
6 to 12	8	7	87.5%
13+	12	10	83.3%

RESULTS BY CASEWORKER DEMOGRAPHICS

Caseload

We found some difference in the effect of caseload on the scoring, with those caseworkers having fewer than 17 cases passing System Performance 81.8% of the time and those caseworkers with 17 or more cases passing 100% of the time. However, there were only two caseworkers who had 17 or more cases, one who had 17 cases and another who had 18. It is likely that part of the reason for Eastern's success is that caseloads are generally kept within manageable levels.

Caseload Size	# in sample	# Acceptable System Performance	% Acceptable System Performance
16 cases or less	22	18	81.8%
17 cases or more	2	2	100%

Worker Experience

Unlike last year when cases of more experienced workers performed better than those of less experienced workers, this year the cases of more experienced workers did not score as well as cases of workers who had been with DCFS a year or less. This is illustrated in the tables below.

Fiscal Year 2003

Months of Caseworker Experience	# in sample	# Acceptable System Performance	% Acceptable System Performance
12 months or less	7	3	60%
13 months or more	19	14	74%

Fiscal Year 2004

Months of Caseworker Experience	# in sample	# Acceptable System Performance	% Acceptable System Performance
12 months or less	7	7	100%
13 months or more	17	13	76.5%

RESULTS BY OFFICES AND SUPERVISORS

The following table displays the overall case results by office and supervisors. Castle Dale office had all of their cases pass System Performance for the third year in a row. In addition, the Ute Family Services, Moab, and Vernal offices achieved 100% acceptable System Performance on their cases. The Blanding and Roosevelt offices each had one case that was not acceptable, while the Price office had two.

Of the supervisors, only Laura Cameron had more than three cases. She had four, and all four of those cases had acceptable System Performance. Betty Ulwelling and Lynn Bigelow each had three cases and all of their cases also had acceptable System Performance.

Case#	Supervisor	Off.	Child Status	System Performance	System Performance by Office	Sys. Perf. by Office last year	System Performance By Supervisor	
04E17	Al Young	B	Acceptable	Unacceptable	1 Acceptable	50%	Al Young	0 Acc.
04E10	Shawn Jack	B	Acceptable	Acceptable	1 Unacceptable			1 Unnacc.
					50%			0%
04E04	Mike Godfrey	C	Acceptable	Acceptable	2 Acceptable	100%	Shawn Jack	1 Acc.
04E11	Mike Godfrey	C	Acceptable	Acceptable	0 Unacceptable			0 Unacc.
					100%			100%
04E01	Laura Cameron	M	Acceptable	Acceptable	4 Acceptable	75%	Mike Godfrey	2 Acc.
04E09	Laura Cameron	M	Acceptable	Acceptable	0 Unacceptable			0 Unacc.
04E12	Laura Cameron	M	Acceptable	Acceptable	100%			100%
04E18	Laura Cameron	M	Acceptable	Acceptable		57%	Laura Cameron	4 Acc.
04E19	Boni Seals	P	Acceptable	Acceptable	3 Acceptable			0 Unacc.
04E20	Boni Seals	P	Acceptable	Acceptable	2 Unacceptable			100%
04E21	Boni Seals	P	Acceptable	Unacceptable	60%		Boni Seals	2 Acc.
04E02	Paul Avery	P	Acceptable	Acceptable				1 Unnacc.
04E07	Paul Avery	P	Acceptable	Unacceptable			67%	
04E22	George Glines	R	Acceptable	Unacceptable	2 Acceptable	100%	Paul Avery	1 Acc.
04E05	Janet Brown	R	Acceptable	Acceptable	1 Unacceptable			1 Unnacc.
04E16	Janet Brown	R	Acceptable	Acceptable	67%			50%
04E03	Betty Ulwelling	U	Acceptable	Acceptable	3 Acceptable	67%	George Glines	0 Acc.
04E06	Betty Ulwelling	U	Acceptable	Acceptable	0 Unacceptable			1 Unnacc.
04E13	Betty Ulwelling	U	Acceptable	Acceptable	100%			0%
04E08	Lynn Bigelow	V	Acceptable	Acceptable	5 Acceptable	50%	Janet Brown	2 Acc.
04E14	Lynn Bigelow	V	Acceptable	Acceptable	0 Unacceptable			0 Unacc.
04E15	Lynn Bigelow	V	Acceptable	Acceptable	100%			100%
04E23	Matt Watkins	V	Acceptable	Acceptable			Betty Ulwelling	3 Acc.
04E24	Matt Watkins	V	Acceptable	Acceptable				0 Unacc.
	System Performance by sub-area							100%
	EO		Northern Area = ER, EV, EU		Western Area = EC, EP		Lynn Bigelow	3 Acc.
fy02	83.3%		46.2%		100.0%			0 Unacc.
fy03	71.4%		75.0%		66.7%			100%
fy04	75.0%		90.9%		71.4%		Matt Watkins	2 Acc.
								0 Unacc.
								100%

Content Analysis

The region exceeded the exit criteria for four of the six core domains. Our content analysis focuses on Functional Assessment, Long Term View, and Prospects for Permanency; the two core indicators that have not reached the exit criteria and the most lagging Child Status indicator. OSR reviewed all of the case stories and extracted comments relevant to these three issues to identify some of the practice issues and system barriers. These findings will be presented to the region in greater detail in separate reports to the administration. A brief summary of the data for each of these indicators follows.

Functional Assessment

Of the twenty-four cases, there was one score of 6, four scores of 5, four scores of 4, twelve scores of 3, and three scores of 2. Every case that scored unacceptably on System Performance also scored unacceptably on this indicator. Eighty percent of the unacceptable scores (12 out of 15) were 3's, meaning they were minimally unacceptable. It is encouraging that the vast majority of the unacceptable cases were just a point away from an acceptable score. The 15 cases that were unacceptable were distributed among all areas of the region, the children in these cases were both latency and adolescent aged, the cases had been open for varying lengths of time, and the cases were both foster care and home-based cases. Offices that especially struggled were Ute Tribal Services where none of the three cases had an acceptable score on functional assessment, Price where four of the five cases had unacceptable scores, and Moab where three of the four cases had unacceptable scores. Roosevelt and Vernal had more acceptable scores.

Office	# in sample	# Acceptable Functional Assessment	% Acceptable Functional Assessment
Roosevelt	3	2	67%
Vernal	5	3	60%
Blanding	2	1	50%
Castle Dale	2	1	50%
Moab	4	1	25%
Price	5	1	20%
Ute Tribal	3	0	0%

Long-Term View

Of the twenty-four cases, there were six scores of 5, six scores of 4, eight scores of 3, three scores of 2, and one score of 1. Three of the four cases that scored unacceptably on System Performance also scored unacceptably on this indicator. Unacceptable scores were spread fairly evenly across offices. There was a significant difference in

foster care cases versus home-based cases. Foster care cases had acceptable scores on 62% of the cases while home-based cases had acceptable scores on only 25% of the cases.

Office	# in sample	# Acceptable Long Term View	% Acceptable Long Term View
Price	5	3	60%
Vernal	5	3	60%
Blanding	2	1	50%
Castle Dale	2	1	50%
Moab	4	2	50%
Roosevelt	3	1	33%
Ute Tribal	3	1	33%

Permanency

Of the twenty-four cases, there were three scores of 5, twelve scores of 4, seven scores of 3, and two scores of 2. There were no 6's or 1's scored on any of the cases. The Ute Family Services, Blanding, and Castle Dale offices achieved acceptable permanency scores on all of their cases. There was no difference between the percentage of acceptable foster care cases and home-based cases. Both achieved acceptable scores in 62% of the cases.

Office	# in sample	# Acceptable Permanency	% Acceptable Permanency
Ute Tribal	3	3	100%
Blanding	2	2	100%
Castle Dale	2	2	100%
Vernal	5	3	60%
Moab	4	2	50%
Price	5	2	40%
Roosevelt	3	1	33%

Summary of Focus Groups Eastern Region QCR FY2004

This year Linda Bayless from the Child Welfare Group and Ray Winger from the Office of Services Review conducted the interviews. Two focus groups were conducted: DCFS Administration and foster parents.

Administration Focus Group

What is working?

- In Moab there are a lot of new staff and they are growing together.
- Focus on post adoption services has been good for partnering with the community. Some students from the U of U are working on this. Some students in Carbon are working on Family Preservation.
- There is an increase in community partners who are willing to participate in the teaming process in Moab and throughout the region.
- DCFS is engaging well with partners and families in providing services.
- Breakthrough Series Collaborative with Casey Foundation, push for the flow of practice as opposed to discrete events has been a positive.
- Ute agreement expires in one year and the discussions are starting for the new agreement.
- Collaborative efforts for drug court have been very positive despite there being no federal funding. Twelve families have been involved in Carbon County.
- A solution in Castle Dale has been to have an experienced caseworker go there while the new worker was in training. Offices have helped cover for each other.
- Eastern Region has hired a worker who is in Salt Lake to help manage the children from the Basin. This worked well for the Basin, but didn't work well for the Moab office.
- Drug Court is working well because there is a focus of time just for these cases. This assures the whole team is on the same page. This has created faster permanency for the children.
- There have been good post-adopt trainings and good work by Karen Sitterud with the cluster groups. This will lead to fewer disruptions in the adoptions. There are now more children in adoptive placements than in foster placements.

What are the challenges?

- There has been a lot of turnover the last six months in Moab. There are at least as many new workers as experienced workers. There is a lot of training to get them through. Emery has also had a lot of turnover.
- Getting all of the paperwork done is a challenge. They are looking for recommendations for reductions to give to the state office.
- There is confusion because of the infusion of new policies and guidelines and how to prioritize them.

- There hasn't been a significant change in getting mental health to the team meetings in Carbon, Emery and San Juan County. San Juan is a particular problem. There is not buy in at the line level. The difference is the supervision in the different offices.
- There are concerns with the tribe. The fatality shows a gap in how the state works with the tribe. The fatality has exacerbated the problem. Bifurcation with the staff is being experienced. It is hard to do social work when you don't agree on fundamental principles.
- Eastern Region has been without an Associate Director since July 1, 2003.
- Eastern Region is losing the rural MSW program from the U of U.
- The requirements of training deadlines are causing stress on workers who feel that they have to choose between meeting the deadlines and the safety of children. Training needs to be spread out more. The difficulty in this region is the travel time required and the fact that so many are gone for training that it has required workers from other offices to help cover. It has caused a strain, but the children's safety needs have been met, although it has created overtime. This has been a problem in Moab and Castle Dale.
- OOH caseload has doubled in the past 3-6 months in Blanding because of delinquency. This is an escalating problem. It is easier for DYC to turn away children than it is for DCFS.
- There is a problem with retention in Moab and there is stress when everyone is new. The courts and the relationship with the judge are stressors. The judge is trying to establish her model of practice vs. the division's model of practice. Workers feel overwhelmed from the beginning and it piles on and there isn't any relief or respite. They are sensing that they may be breaking the cycle, they may be building an enduring group of workers. It is hard to juggle the demands of the judge vs. the practice model and the need for training. The distances involved create an atmosphere of stress when there is no allowance for overtime. Allowances for travel have diminished.
- The Regional Director has low expectations for this review. Based on a comparison of samples, the foster care sample has a high number of residential cases that appears skewed. She feels that "High – End" cases are over-represented [1% in universe vs. 12% in the sample]. Another possible influence on the outcome is the intense focus on training that prevents the application of the practice model and cutting corners due to time constraints. A compromise has been to hold the caseload back until the training has been completed. This is a move in the right direction. In some offices there has been no choice but to give the new workers a caseload because of the high caseload.
- The QCR is very different from the federal review and is weighted differently. They are just now learning how the QCR can help the region. They believe that is they don't worry about the QCR, but just worry about practice then success in the QCR will follow.
- There is a need for discretionary training that the workers can choose from to maintain their skills. Giving the workers some choices would breathe some energy into the region.

Foster Parents

The seven foster parents who participated in the focus group had various levels of experience with children as indicated in this list:

- 12-13 foster children total
- 110 children total
- 4 foster children currently plus respite for an additional 2
- 2 foster children currently
- 2 foster children currently
- 2 foster children currently plus 9 biological children
- about 30 foster children total

What is working or getting better?

- They have seen the Practice Model implemented and the best interests of the child are the focus of the workers while they try to reunite families.
- The workers are more compassionate with the families and with the foster parents. This varies among caseworkers, but overall it is positive.
- There is a positive difference from 10-11 years ago, with more focus on the interest of the child rather than parental rights. There is a greater emphasis on permanency.
- The training is good. They are getting what they need. Less is better. Practice Model training is not as cut and dried, like the strengths-based aspect, team problem solving, and listening to where people are coming from. Practice Model training opened their eyes to the perspective of the biological families; that they are good people who made a bad choice.
- There is a quarterly Brown Bag luncheon for workers and foster parents to have an informal setting to discuss what is working and not working and express appreciation to each other for their efforts.
- It makes a big difference when teams come together. The judge expects the foster parents to be at court and asks for their input if they can't attend. This cuts down on triangulation and manipulation.

What are improvement opportunities?

- Some workers just show up at the foster home whenever they want to and they bring their own children. They shouldn't just show up and expect to be able to visit so workers can get the visit in by the end of the month. Foster parents need a chance to make arrangements so that the worker can be the focus of their attention during the visit. Some workers don't show up for a couple months. Some foster parents like it when the caseworker drops by. It gives an accurate picture. One worker showed up at 10:30 wanting to wake up the children and do a visit. Some foster parents have a need for strict scheduling because of the kind of kids they have in their home. Workers need to consider who the foster parents are working with. For younger children, occasional drop-in visits are okay.
- Biological parents sometimes call to say a home visit is approved and foster parents need to know that it is approved by the caseworker. If they don't hear

back from the caseworker in four days, then they make the best decision they can. There is a lack of responsiveness from workers. They are not responding to messages while in training. It should be mandatory that either the worker or their supervisor check messages daily. There needs to be coverage. Foster parents need to know to communicate with and know who is next in line.

- The biggest problem is the unavailability of caseworkers. Workers need cell phones.
- Foster parents are concerned that workers have a caseload before they are trained. One worker had 25 cases without completing training.
- There is a desire for the child to be involved in extra-curricular activities, but funding is not provided. One foster parent had to pay for part of the child's plane ticket to go to her father's funeral in Texas.
- With medically fragile children, the contract provider doesn't have all the needs. There is a long list of people and requirements and needs that is overwhelming. Why can't there be some consolidation of services? It seems like there is a lot of waste and duplication of people coming through the home. There needs to be coordination and planning.
- The workers are overworked. The needs in society are becoming greater. More children need care and services. There are good case managers, but they get less training. They are overworked and budgets get cut. When you have structured placements, foster parents can't wait to deal with a crisis. They help immediately.

On a positive note, foster parents have found that especially over the past three years the workers have been open and caring and considerate of their needs. The caseworkers are far above the norm. Foster parents like being a part of the team.

Eastern Region Exit Conference Notes October 31, 2003

Strengths:

- Drug court has been helpful to parents
- Teaming has been integrated into work process
- Mentoring
- Families see workers as caring
- Good staff and good teamwork in small offices
- Good case knowledge
- Good connections to extended family
- Worker continuity
- Using the team to select placement
- Team and family working together
- Professionals partnering with community advocates (Frontier)
- Excellent preparation for transitions
- Great foster parents
- Foster parents feel like partners and appreciate the training they receive
- Great school interaction and support
- Cultural needs are met
- Professionals acknowledging need to improve
- Local clinical staff involvement
- Parents and foster parents feel listened to
- Family Support Center provides respite
- Good teaming between supervisors and staff
- Good effort to maintain family and cultural connections in spite of distance
- Offices working well together
- More thorough, comprehensive assessments

UUUUUUUU Practice Improvement Opportunities:

- Child issues were overlooked by Drug Court
- There are still gaps in assessment
- Focusing on child or parent, but not both
- Teams are missing informal members and some formal members resulting in unclear big picture
- Functional Assessment format is seen by some as a “fill in the blank” document
- Lack of understanding of underlying needs and doing analysis
- Look at developmental needs at every transition and major decision
- Still need capable and experienced mentors for some new workers
- Use team meetings to solve problems and make critical decisions
- Use the assessment to inform the team
- Look at the steps to permanency
- Long term view is stated, but it isn’t accompanied by strategies to get there

- Safety and crisis plans are sometimes implicit only and not shared with all team members
- Lack of networking between providers
- Lack of DV services in rural areas

Recommendations:

- Supervisors and mentors review staff work
- Supervisors and mentors demonstrate and model what they would like workers to do
- Look at maintaining progress after the case is closed when addressing long term view
- Develop a regional plan to follow up on recent training on assessment
- Identify an office that is doing well and use that as a model
- Provide training that would help workers and families develop full teams that address all of the family's issues
- Look at the level of skill needed to refine practice
- Find out what supervisors and mentors need to be able to provide what their workers need

System barriers:

- Drug Court doesn't address underlying needs

Suggestions from Staff / Region:

- Strengthen the Family Preservation Program
- Provide more support to foster parents, such as a foster parent consultant
- Foster teamwork between regions such as doing visits
- Figure out what is missing in the functional assessment process. There is a tendency to copy a model.
- Get practice in doing Functional Assessments on SAFE
- Share Practice Model with the community by participating in community groups
- Have workers' assessments reviewed and give individualized feedback
- Make the assessment a product of the team, not just the worker
- Simplify the Functional Assessment template
- Do something to improve worker retention and provide incentives